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A R I A N S
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IDOLATRY fix'd upon them;
Their Criminal Manner of Subscribing
to ARTICLES of FAITH;
Their INSINCERITY and DOUBLE-DEALING:
Greater DIFFICULTIES on the *Arian*,
than on the Orthodox Side;
The DOCTRINE of the First pernicious
to the Commonwealth:
The ORTHODOX persuaded to exert
themselves in Opposition to this spread-
ing HERESY.

By Sir RICHARD BLACKMORE, M. D.

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UNIVERSITY

OF THE CITY OF LONDON

IN A TESTIMONY OF THE
RESPECT AND ESTEEM
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE LATE
JOHN RICHARDSON
OF THE CITY OF LONDON
A BARRISTER AT LAW
WHO DIED THE 14TH DAY
OF APRIL 1791



BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, M. D.

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Modern ARIANS *Unmask'd.*



SECTION I.

The Importance of the Subject.



GREAT Number of Men among us, which is very surprising, speak of the Controversy between the Believers of Christ's Deity, and their Adversaries, as a Matter of no great Concernment. It is only, say they, a Difference of Opinion about a Subject that is difficult to be understood; that there are Men of Learning and Probity on either side of the Question, and therefore they conclude that such Men should live peaceably together, and maintain Charity and Friendship with one another. Hence they are not afraid to censure those that

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engage in this Dispute, and strenuously contend for the Christian Faith, as turbulent and injudicious Persons, who lay too great a Stress upon Matters of inferiour Moment.

Now to disabuse these Gentlemen, I will set before them the Weight and Importance of this Controversy. It is a Controversy that nearly affects Salvation, and concerns the very Being of Christianity, since the Objects which the Orthodox and their Adversaries worship, are essentially different. The Object which the Orthodox worship, is one who never had Beginning; that which the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity worship, had a Beginning; the one exists necessarily, the other does not exist necessarily: one, in the Opinion of the Worshipper, is equal with the Father, God most High, in Knowledge, Power, and Glory: the other, in the Worshipper's Judgment, is not equal with God most High, in Knowledge, Power, and Glory.

Now the plain Consequence of this Difference about the very Object of Worship, is, that the Believers of Christ's Divinity must be condemn'd by their Adversaries, if they are true to their Principles, as guilty of Idolatry for paying Divine Worship to one, who, in their Opinion, is not God most High, Infinite, Eternal, and of himself Omniscient, which I have shewn in a former Writing on this Subject, and shall
more

more evidently evince in the Sequel of this Discourse. It will then follow, that the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity must be Idolaters likewise, by continuing in constant Communion with our Churches, which in their Judgment, if they follow their own Doctrine, are guilty of that Impiety; and on the other hand, the Orthodox, or Catholicks, must look on them as Idolaters, for paying Divine Honours to one who is not God most High. Since therefore Controversies become, and are denominated great and important, from the Greatness and Importance of their Subject; and since here the Object of Divine Worship is the Point in Debate, this Dispute must be of the highest Nature, and next to that about the Foundation of all Religion, the Existence of God; and must be allow'd to be the most material that can arise about the Christian Scheme.

It should be here consider'd, that we look upon our Controversy with the Papists, from whom we separated, to be of the greatest Consequence; yet upon the Comparison, it will appear, that our Difference from the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity, is at least as wide and considerable. The Papists have still continued firm in the Belief of the Sacred Trinity, and indeed of all the other Articles of our Creed, tho they have added many more Doctrines to them, which are false and intolerable,

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particularly that of Transubstantiation; for which our pious Reformers, to their immortal Honour, renounced the Communion of that Church.

It is clear as Noon-day, that the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity maintain Opinions no less absurd in Religion, nor less inconsistent with Scriptural Revelation, than the Doctrines of the Papists; that not only shake, but lay the Ax to the Root of the Christian Institution: Our illustrious Reformers did not bespeak one another in the Language of many of these Times, in respect of the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity: They did not say, Gentlemen, we are afraid we are too warm in this Dispute with the Church of *Rome*, and are carrying Things too far; we should keep ourselves in temper, think charitably of our Neighbours, treat them with Moderation and Benevolence, and put the best Interpretation upon their Expressions: They are many of them Men of Learning, Candour, and Regularity of Life; and should you go on with such Violence, Things between us may come to an open Rupture, and a great Schism may divide the Church, to the Offence of many worthy Persons, and the great Detriment of the Christian Religion. No, contrary to the Rules of worldly Policy, Prudence, and of Charity and Moderation falsely so call'd, with a true Christian Spirit, and undaunted Fortitude, they glo-

gloriously asserted the Doctrines of Christ, and withdrew from the Pollutions of *Rome*.

It is true, the People are not so much alarm'd at the Growth of *Arianism*, as they are apt to be at the Growth of Popery, because they do not look upon it as so malignant and dangerous a Doctrine. The *Arian* Controversy has been sunk, and laid asleep many hundred Years; and their cruel Persecution of the Orthodox being of such ancient Date, and having been executed in distant Countries, cannot make such strong Impressions on the People, as are caused by the Errors of the Papists, which have been constantly writ and preach'd against, and by their Violence and religious Barbarities, which so lately rag'd in this Country. If the *Arians* had been as lately in Power and Possession of this Kingdom, as the Papists were, and had the Nation, upon a just Abhorrence of their Principles, separated from them as we did from the Church of *Rome*; and had as many vehement Discourses come from the Pulpit and the Press against them, had there been so many solemn Days appointed to keep up the Peoples Aversion to them, on account of their Cruelty; had there been chain'd in all our Churches Books of Martyrs that suffer'd by the Malice and Violence of the *Arians*, as there still are of those, that were destroy'd by the Papists; and were the People as well

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acquainted with the bloody Persecutions of the first, as to talk familiarly of their Destruction of innocent Persons, as they do of the Desolations made by the last, they would express the same Detestation of the one, as they do of the other: But now, while the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity live in religious Communion with the Orthodox, join with them in divine Service, and receive together the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; while they mingle with them in Business, Diversions, and familiar Conversation, and appear inoffensive Persons, and altogether such as themselves: they cannot conceive these Men can be so bad as the Papists, tho, in Reality, their Opinions are more opposite to those of the Orthodox Protestants, than are those of the Church of *Rome*, which stedfastly adheres to the Catholick Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

And further to shew of how great Consequence this Controversy is; the Reader should be inform'd, that the Catholick Believer of Christ's Deity must be compell'd by his Principles, to pronounce his Adversary guilty of Idolatry; and that for this Reason, because, by worshipping one Supreme, and one or more Inferiour Gods, his Crime must be the same with that of the ancient Heathens, who were condemn'd as Idolaters, for paying divine Adoration to many subordinate Gods and one supreme, which

is asserted and proved by Bishop *Stillingfleet*, and a learned foreign Writer *. Thus while the Disbelievers of Christ's Divinity in the strict Sense, worship with the highest Honours another besides God most High, they are guilty of downright Idolatry; and it is in vain to pretend a Divine positive Command, that shall abolish a Law of Nature, which forbids such robbing of God of his Honour; nor indeed can the most excellent Being, who is not God Eternal and most High, be capable of receiving Divine Adoration, which must suppose a Finite Being to be endow'd with Infinite Perfections: but more of this in another Writing, which I will not here anticipate. Let therefore Things be called by their own Names, let Idolatry be unmask'd, and go by its proper Appellation: it is not candid and charitable, but unjust and absurd, to speak and think of Things as much better, or less criminal, than they really are. It is in vain therefore for the Favourers of the Gentlemen of the New Sentiments, to palliate their Errors with affected Softenings, and to labour with Expressions of Tenderness and false Humanity, to lessen their Deformity and Danger.

It is insignificant to say that they are learned, honest, and well-meaning Persons, that their Doctrine is harmless, and only

* J. Gerrard Voss. in his *Book de Idolatria.*

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consists in a different Manner of Conception and Phrase; at least, that it is consistent with Christianity, and that therefore the Orthodox should look upon them as Christian Brethren, and join with them in religious Worship: for the Question is not whether the Gentlemen of the New Scheme are learned Criticks and subtile Disputants, nor whether they are honest and well-meaning Persons; the whole Question is, whether they are not Idolaters according to the Principles of the Orthodox, and whether the Orthodox are not Idolaters according to the Principles of their Adversaries. And if this be so, then the Conclusion is evident, that they cannot, with a Conscience undefiled, hold Communion with one another; for there can be no Agreement between repugnant and opposite Principles, no Communion between Light and Darkeness, nor religious Fellowship between Men, whose Objects of Worship are essentially different.

It is very certain that this Controversy was, in former Ages, look'd upon to be of the highest Importance; otherwise, we cannot conceive why the *Arians* and the Orthodox should persecute one another with so much Cruelty and Violence, as, to their great Dishonour, it is known they did. But the *Arian* Empire, Religion, and Persecution ceasing together, the Christian Church has, undisturb'd by that Adversary,
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profess'd the Catholick Faith thro many Ages down to this: and this I mentioned in my former Writing, as a just Prejudice in favour of the *Anti-Arian* Doctrine; for should it be allow'd that the Believers of Christ's Deity are erroneous and heretical in so great a Point, it would follow, that the Gates of Hell, that is, the Powers of Darkness, have notoriously and universally, almost ever since the Institution of the Christian Religion, prevail'd against his Church, which is what our Saviour promis'd should never come to pass.

Should it be objected, that the Papists may, by this way of arguing, justify the peculiar Doctrines of their Church: I answer, that the Case is far different; for first, as I said before, the Papists have still profess'd their Belief of the holy Trinity, and all the Articles of our Creed, tho, as said, they maintain besides many absurd and unreasonable Inventions of their own. Now it is certain that the Promises made by Christ of continuing with, and always supporting his Church, must be understood of the essential and fundamental Articles of his Religion, without which the very Being of his Church could not be upheld; for he has told us, that in After-Times, Heresies and great Errors should arise, such as, if it were possible, should deceive the very Elect; that great Apostacies should happen, and that Men should be deluded, and

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given up to believe a Lye: so that it is evident, that when Christ promised that the Gates of Hell should not prevail against his Church, it extended no farther than this, That no damnable Heresies, such as are destructive of the Christian Faith, should universally overspread the Christian World. And this leads me to a second Answer:

That supposing the Doctrines of *Rome* do really subvert the Foundations of Christ's Religion, yet it is certain that the *Roman* was never more than a particular, and by no means the universal Church. It was contain'd within the Limits of the *Roman* Empire, and was therefore only one, tho a large National Church: and tho this single National Church should be supposed to have extinguish'd the Orthodox Faith, yet it does not follow but that the Churches in *Ethiopia* and *Nubia*, remote Parts of *Africa*, and those planted in the Eastern Regions of the World, as well as in those Parts of *Europe* that were never under the Dominion of *Rome*, might still maintain the essential Doctrines of the Christian Creed.

Besides, it ought to be consider'd, that the most absurd and Anti-Scriptural Doctrines of the Papists, were not entertain'd and asserted by their General Councils, and the publick Approbation of their Church, till many Ages after the first planting of Christ's Religion, particularly their worst Doctrine,

Doctrine, that of Transubstantiation; and when that was broached, it was long opposed, and always rejected by many of the Inhabitants of *Piedmont, France, &c.* as our Writers against the Papists have plainly prov'd: and since the happy Reformation, that strange Doctrine has been condemn'd as erroneous and unchristian, by many States and several Kingdoms, that with a pious Fortitude, and a generous Spirit of Religion, renounc'd the Communion, and shook off the Yoke of the Church of *Rome*. Thus their greatest Corruptions are neither antient, constant, nor universal; and, as I have said before, they are such as they hold together with all the Articles of sound Faith: whence it will appear that the *Romanists* can have no Advantage from this Argument which I bring against the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity, from the Promises of Christ, That the Gates of Hell should never prevail against his Church.

But if this should not be look'd on as a sufficient Answer, as I believe it ought to be; if the Assertion be limited and restrain'd to the purest, wisest, and best Churches, the Argument will retain its Force, and be conclusive.

Now from what has been said, it is clear, that the Difference between the Believers of Christ's Deity, and the Gentlemen of the new Scheme of the old Heresy, is not
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so small and insignificant as some People would make it, but that it is of so high a Nature, as affects the Foundations of the Christian Religion, and consequently our Eternal Felicity.

Disbelievers of Christ's Deity obliged to renounce the Communion of the Orthodox.

IN my late Writing, to which this is a Supplement, I asserted and prov'd that when the Modern Disbelievers of Christ's Deity forsook our Faith, they ought to have separated from us, and renounc'd our Communion; the Premises whence I deduced that Conclusion, were, That all Christians ought to withdraw themselves from Idolatrous Worshippers, and that the Anti-Arians, or Orthodox, were such Idolatrous Worshippers in the Opinion of such Disbelievers. The first Proposition is oppos'd by none, and there is not the least Reason to deny the latter; and therefore I thence inferr'd, that it is the indispensable Duty of all Disbelievers of Christ's Deity to separate from our religious Assemblies. This I believ'd I had urged with the clearest Evidence; but whether it be that the Gentlemen whom this Argument concerns, do not perceive its Force, but look upon it as impotent and inconclusive; or whether they
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are unwilling to undergo the Temporal Inconveniences that would attend the distinguishing of themselves by a publick Confession of their Principles; I do not see that I have prevailed with any to perform a Duty, the Neglect of which is an Offence inconsistent with Christianity, and destructive to the Character of a Man of Piety and Probity. Therefore to make this farther evident, I will endeavour to remove all imaginable Objections that can be brought against my Position.

They will not surely alledge, that they do not avoid the Communion of the Orthodox, for fear of rending the Church by creating a great Schism; for they are too learned and clear-sighted not to know, that it is no criminal or unjustifiable Schism, but a laudable and necessary Separation, when we renounce the Communion of any Churches, or Religious Assemblies, that are in Principle and Practice downright Idolaters. Now the Orthodox Believers of the Deity of Christ, openly and freely confess, and glory in the Confession, that they pay their Worship and Adoration to the Son of God, as to one equal with the Father, God blessed for ever, in Duration or unbeginning Existence, Knowledge, Power, and Glory, and as the same in Nature and Substance with him, who a distinct Person: but the Disbeliever of Christ's Deity must be constrain'd by his Principles to condemn this Worship as ido-

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idolatrous, while he will not allow such unlimited absolute Perfections do belong to Christ, who, in their Opinion, is God only in a relative Sense, and that in an inferior subordinate Degree; as he is the Great Officer, or Minister of God most High, in his Government of the World, and especially of his Church. The Worship then we pay to Christ as one that has all the Infinite Perfections above express'd, must be pronounced impious by all the Disbelievers of our Saviour's Deity; for if their Opinions are true, we give Supreme Adoration to one who is not God most High, but to a false God, an Idol, or one that is not God by Nature, and consequently no God: and thus to defraud the Almighty of his Right, the Honour, and Worship due to him alone, and give it to another besides himself, I believe is acknowledg'd, by the universal Consent of Christian Writers of all Denominations, to be an uncontested Practice of Idolatry; and then the Consequence is evident, that those that deny the Redeemer's Deity, are obliged, in Conscience, to disclaim all religious Communion with us.

It may perhaps be said that this Argument is inconclusive, because our Adversaries do by no means charge us with Idolatry, nor believe that we are so highly criminal, but that they may, and ought to continue in our Communion.

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This is what I imagine they will alledge to excuse their Conduct; but alas! how weak is this Defence? Is the Question what they do believe of our Practice, or what they ought to believe? whether they charge us with Idolatry; or whether, if they follow their own Principles in their clear, immediate, and necessary Consequences, they will not be compell'd to condemn us as guilty of that great Sin? What the Gentlemen of the new Sentiments think of the Orthodox, is not the Subject in Debate; but what their Principles will lead and oblige them to think: if in their Opinion we are not Idolaters, let them renounce their Doctrine; if we are, let them renounce our Communion. And now let these subtle Disputants call in Aid all the Forces of Criticism and Philosophy; let them explain, distinguish, shift, and strive, as long as they please, to disengtangle themselves; they are here set fast, and can never get off.

It may perhaps be urged that they are justified in not condemning us, because we pay Divine Worship to a wrong Object, purely upon a Mistake, while we believe him to be true God most High. To this I answer, If a Mistake of that kind can excuse Men from the Guilt of Idolatry, then it is very evident that the *Pagan Nations*, neither formerly, nor at present, can be charg'd with such Impiety, because
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they only mistook in the Object of their Worship, or the Manner of conveying it. When the *Persians*, or the *American* Heathens worship the Sun, they look upon him to be an animated and intelligent Being, according to the *Aristotelian* Hypothesis; and those who worshipped the Host of Heaven, paid them Veneration upon the account of their suppos'd Divine Perfections, and their Goodness and Beneficence to Mankind: and it is very evident, that no Nation, or any single Person, did ever worship false Gods, while they believed them to be such, except some Philosophers, that were very few, compared with all the Nations of Idolaters, who, to shew Obedience to the Laws of their Country, and avoid Punishment, gave into the Practice of the People, and some apostatizing Christians, who, not able to undergo the fiery Tryal, comply'd with Idolaters, and made Shipwreck of a good Conscience. If then a Mistake about the Object of Divine Worship will excuse Men from Idolatry, the Heathen Kingdoms must be acquitted: and if this Principle be allow'd, why may it not be extended to the Atheist for not worshipping any God? For he will declare that he has, with the greatest Sincerity and Application, weigh'd and consider'd the Reasons alledg'd for the Proof of a Deity, and has found them insufficient to convince him. And why may not his Mistake be
pleaded

pleaded in his Favour and Defence for worshipping no God, as the Mistake of others may excuse them for worshipping a false one?

It is known that the Papists pay Divine Worship to the Host, upon the Belief that the Elements of Bread and Wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ; but does this Mistake make them innocent? Do our Adversaries, the Patrons of the new Scheme, think that the Papists are free from Idolatry upon that Account? Did not our venerable Reformers separate from them because of their Idolatry, notwithstanding their Mistake about the Object of their Worship, and was their Reformation a culpable Schism? It is certain that their Error does not justify their Practice; and * indeed some of their own best Writers are so honest and ingenuous, as freely to declare, that if they are mistaken in the Article of Transubstantiation, they are certainly Idolaters.

From what has been said, it will evidently appear, that if the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity will discharge the Orthodox from the Guilt of Idolatry in worshipping our Saviour with the highest Divine Honours, that their Charity, which however, I imagine, begins at home, is inconsistent with, and destructive of their own Scheme; and

* See Bishop Stillingfleet's *Idolatry of the Church of Rome.*

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therefore if they will act uprightly, let them take their Choice, they must, as said before, either disclaim their own Principles, or leave our Communion; one of these is certainly their indispensable Duty. But if they will continue to reject and oppose our Faith, and yet obstinately continue with us in Religious Fellowship, and obtrude their Company upon us, to cover and conceal their Doctrine and Distinction; I cannot, for my part, after due Search and Consideration, find out a Reason that will justify such a criminal and unchristian Conduct.

If any should judge that these Expressions are too harsh and severe, let them reflect on the great Importance of this Undertaking, which is by Reason and Argument to convince Men of the Danger they are exposed to by embracing Heretical Doctrines, and to reclaim them from their Error; as likewise to animate others who are yet sound in their Faith, to stand upon their Guard against the Attempts and Insinuations of vigilant and subtle Seducers. This Plague is malignant, the Infection spreads, and the Christian Religion will be in Danger if its Power increases: In such a Case it is a Mark of Benevolence and Compassion to rebuke Men sharply; otherwise, the God of Love and Mercy would never have given such a Command. A Surgeon is not look'd upon as cruel and hard-hearted, that lances a dangerous Swelling,

ling, searches a deep Wound, or applies to an obstinate Sore a painful Medicine; nor is it from want of Tendernefs and Goodwill, that a Physician uses the Severities of his Art to awaken and recover a Lethargick Patient, and the more stupid and insensible he is, the more rigorous the Means must be to prevent his Danger. It is plain that soft and more moderate Applications to the distemper'd Men of the new Scheme, have been fruitless and ineffectual: What then, must they be deserted, and left to the sad Consequences of contumacious Heresy? That indeed would be an Example of great Cruelty. How can a good Man stand unconcerned, and perceive no Emotions of Humanity, no Strugglings of Charity towards Persons in such a dangerous State? What if some have been hitherto obdurate and impenetrable to our Reasons, and deaf to all our Arguments and Expostulations, shall no more kind Efforts be made to restore them?

The Arianizing Party complain, without Reason, of Persecution.

IT is very surprizing, that the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity should entertain a Fancy, that if their Adversaries, the Protestant Catholicks, should renounce Communion with them, as some have done, that they should condemn this as
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Violence and Persecution, and every where declaim against it, as such, with great Vehemence. Now I will endeavour to remove these Prejudices, and convince them that they are mistaken in this Point, to prevent any more such uncharitable Censures.

It is clear that the Atheist can have no Right to the Protection of any Government, because he can give no Security for his Loyalty and Obedience to the Statutes of the Land; upon which Account alone, he can pretend to any Benefit from the Laws of his Country. Now the Reason why an Atheist can give no Security to the Government where he lives, is, that the Oaths, Contracts, and Promises, which are required of him to express his Approbation of the Government, and secure his faithful Observation of the Laws of it, are idle and insignificant; for not believing that any God exists, who should punish Perjury, he cannot think himself obliged to keep his Oath or Covenant, any longer than it is for his Interest or his Safety so to do: he must therefore laugh in himself, when he eludes and mocks the Government with a solemn Invocation of a Divine Power, while the impious Hypocrite believes that he swears by Nothing: and it is the same thing as to his Contracts and Promises with his Neighbour, and his Evidence, upon Oath, before a Magistrate, that

affects

affects the Life or Estate of others. Such a Person then is incapable of being a Member of Civil Society, and has no Title to the Advantages of it; and therefore, if upon sufficient Conviction, he should be banish'd from the Community, he has no reason to complain, having receiv'd no Injury: this then is no Persecution.

But this is not the Case of the *Heathen, Infidel, Mahometan, or Jew*; for these all acknowledging the Being and Providence of God, are capable of binding themselves to be true to the Government by their solemn Oath; which if they do, they are intitled to Protection, till they forfeit their Right by the Violation of their Contract: and therefore while they continue good and peaceable Subjects, and do not propagate their respective Opinions to the Disturbance of the Government, if their Lives, Liberties, and Estates, are invaded by Violence upon a religious Account, in my Judgment they are injuriously treated.

In like manner, if any Denomination of Christians are debarr'd of their Civil Rights, and suffer the Loss of Liberty and Property, for holding Notions in Religion, which neither in themselves, nor as they are carried on, and contended for with Heat and Fury, affect the Tranquillity of the State, it may justly be affirmed they are injured. It is plain the *Jews* inhabiting among us, have a Right to be protected from

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from Violence, by virtue of the Statutes made in their Favour: And have not all Christians an equal Claim to the Benefits and Advantages of the Government, by virtue of the Laws of their Country? The propagating sound Belief by violent Means, is not prescribed or warranted by the Christian Institution. We no where find that any Precepts were issued out by Christ, for levying Military Forces to act against Infidelity or Heresy, any Orders given for the Publishers of Christianity to plant their Faith Sword in hand, and to lay the Nations waste and desolate, by the bloody Method of *Mahomet*, if they would not receive their heavenly Revelation. It is true, that the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, by the Terrors of the Lord, did persuade Men to believe his Doctrine; but those were not the Temporal Terrors of merciless Dragoons, or a bloody Inquisition, nor Confiscations, Prisons, Mines, and Gallies: no, the persuasive Terrors that *St. Paul* us'd, were the Indignation and Wrath of God, in case they obstinately refused his Revelation: Men, as to secular Punishments, might for him live undisturbed here, if they would run the Hazard of everlasting and unsufferable Torments hereafter.

The greatest Monarch of the World being but a subaltern Officer to the Lord of Hosts, a Deputy of the King of Kings, commission'd

mission'd to act under him in a part of his Government, cannot lawfully exercise more Power than is delegated to him from his Sovereign; if therefore any Civil Magistrate shall inflict Pains and Penalties in Case of Opinions merely religious, if he has no Power given him in his Commission for so doing, he proceeds in an arbitrary and illegal Manner, and acts, tho a Magistrate, without Authority.

Here a great Question will arise, whether God has invested the Magistrate with Power to interpose coercively for the Preservation of the publick Peace, when contumacious and insolent Hereticks involve the Nation in turbulent Contentions and Party-Rage, which manifestly shake and endanger the Government? When Ecclesiastick Strife and Faction is carry'd on to such a Height, the Magistrate, whose Duty it is to protect the State, must be suppos'd to be entrusted with sufficient Power to do his Duty; and therefore, if the Repose and Safety of the State are greatly threatned, as before described, he is certainly empower'd to prevent the Danger; and if no other than coercive Means are capable of procuring his End, they must be allow'd as lawful. But how far this coercive Force may be extended, and with what Limits it is circumscribed, is a Point not so easy to be determined.

But how much soever the Magistrate may, at any time, transgress the Bounds of his
D Power,

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Power, by interposing in religious Controversies, it is manifest that no Christian Churches are guilty of Persecution, which exercise only those Spiritual Powers with which their Founder has invested them. To renounce Communion with Hereticks, whose Principles are repugnant to the Christian Faith, is the uncontested Right and Duty of every Christian Society, and it is most absurd and ridiculous, to call the Execution of this Authority, Violence and Persecution: and if Churches have a scriptural Authority to withhold Communion from Hereticks, it must follow, that they have Power to use all lawful Means to convict an Heretick; and if so, they must require of him such an Account of the Soundness of his Faith, as may give them Satisfaction. If a Heretick is one that wrests the literal Scripture, as some Readers of *St. Paul* did, to their own Condemnation, as certainly it is; then the literal Scripture must be restor'd to its genuine Sense by other explanatory Expressions: and it must follow from hence, that the Person accus'd, or suspected of Heresy, that is, one who has wrested the Scripture to a pernicious Meaning, must either use such explanatory Words as the Church shall require, or, at least, such as himself shall draw up, which shall be equivalent and synonomous, and so satisfactory to those who legally ask it. And to call this Persecution and an unwarrantable Imposition, is to supply the want of Reason and good

good Sense, by vehement and clamorous Expressions. It is in vain urged, that this is to break in upon Christian Liberty; on the contrary, the Persons of that Opinion, how inflexibly soever they adhere to their Sentiments, stand fast in a Liberty with which Christ never made them free: for if he has left his Followers in that Latitude, he has in vain made it the Duty of Christian Churches to admit Members into their Society upon a sufficient Declaration of the Christian Faith, and to exclude those who apostatize from it, and fall into gross Heresies; since, as I have urg'd in my former Writing, this is altogether impracticable, if no Form of Words is requir'd to explain the Sense of Scripture, which is often notoriously wrested; for all the grossest, and most extravagant Hereticks, that ever sprung up in any Age, or that are now existing, did, and will readily subscribe to the whole Body of Scripture, and every Part of it, if no Explanation be demanded.

But it is objected, that such Forms of Words are human Words, and Man's Invention; so are all Words whatsoever that contain the Christian Revelation: Reason itself is human, and is that the Cause why they are prejudiced against it? They will say, I suppose, that the Words of Scripture, tho' invented by Men, were the Words of Christ, or inspir'd Penmen, convey'd to us for a Rule of Faith. Be it so, they are not-

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withstanding wrested by Hereticks to an Anti scriptural Sense; and how shall they be convicted and distinguish'd, if no Form of Words declaratory of the right Sense, be offer'd to be acknowledg'd or subscribed by them? But of this I have spoken at large in my former Writing.

After all, a grievous Complaint is made, that this is an unjustifiable Imposition upon the Conscience. Arbitrary Impositions upon the Conscience, are certainly to be condemn'd and abhorr'd; but the Charge may sometimes be used to misguide and stir up the Passions of the People, to serve a Cause. It is strange, even to Admiration, that any Man should believe that to be an Imposition, which is only a Mark, or a Testimony, of a Person's Qualification to be a Member of a Christian Society, which the Person to whom it is propos'd, may comply with, or refuse, without incurring any Penalty. Have not all Civil Societies of what Denomination soever, all voluntary Cabals and Assemblies of Men, some Rules and Orders which the Members engage to observe? And if any are deny'd Admission, or excluded, because they refus'd this Qualification, may they therefore complain of unwarrantable Impositions?

And if any Person possess'd of a gainful Place, should refuse to conform himself longer to the Orders of any Company or Society, and should, for that Reason, be dismiss'd
from

from it, should this be call'd Oppression? If some Pastors of a Church, should ask the Pastors of another, or some Member of one Church, should ask the Members of another, what their Opinion is in any Point of Divinity, while the Persons that are desired to declare their Sentiments, are commonly at liberty whether they will answer or not; are the Enquirers guilty of an unchristian Imposition, for proposing the Question? I said commonly, because when Persons lie under a great and general Suspicion of being fallen from fundamental Christian Articles, they are bound in Conscience to speak out, that thus they may wipe off the Suspicion, and clear their Character, if they are innocent and unjustly charg'd. For in such a Case, to continue inflexible to the importunate Entreaties of their Friends and Brethren, and persevere in an unaccountable Silence and Neutrality, is a Conduct, which, I confess, I am not able to understand. If Gentlemen would a little consider the Nature of a criminal Imposition, and would settle the Meaning of the Word, they would not, surely, insist upon such groundless Notions of Persecution. Nothing is more unreasonable than this, except the Outcry, which some have made, that when Cause has been given to lay them under Suspicion of being revolted from the Faith, they have been persecuted by those who have mentioned such a Suspicion: for this, they say, is to bring

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bring upon them publick Reproach, and expose them to the Displeasure and Neglect of their Neighbours. Persecution must be taken in a very wide Sense indeed, to take in this Behaviour of the Persons complain'd of. Is it then no criminal Matter to deviate from sound Faith, but a great Injury to have it said that one is suspected to have done so? Men may easily avoid this terrible Persecution, by publicly declaring, which, in this Juncture, in my Opinion, it is their Duty to do, that their Principles are Christian and Catholick.

I am sorry that I am oblig'd, for the Conviction of Opponents, to produce Arguments, and pursue them so far in so plain a Case. Tho' the Morals of this Nation are so much sunk, I did not think our Reason was at so low an Ebb: but notwithstanding so many Persons, some by the Weakness of their Understandings, and some by the Strength of their Passions, and others by the Conjunction of both, have eluded the Force of the Reasons brought against them by many excellent Defenders of the Catholick Faith, and made their Attempts unsuccessful; some Pains however, as said before, should still be taken with them, for it is pity they should be given up as deplorable and past Recovery.

I was ever an Enemy to Persecution, in the true Notion of it; but let not Hereticks and Infidels cry out of Persecution, when there

there is not the least Ground for such a Charge. Let them remember how bitterly they inveigh'd, but very lately, against others, for using this Expression, That the Church was in Danger; and upbraided them with Insincerity for so doing. I am very sure they are now even with their Adversaries, in crying out *Persecution! Persecution!* when there is not the least Pretence to justify that invidious Clamour: but it serves a Turn, and must be continued for Party-Designs.

I do not call for Fire and Sword, nor importune the secular Arm to interpolate in Religious Disputes; but I think, and I hope with great Reason, that in such a Juncture as this, in which pernicious Errors in Religion are confidently propagated, that all warrantable Weapons, that are put into the Hands of the Church, abstracted from the Civil Power, may and should be us'd. It is in the power of Churches of every Denomination, to refuse Communion with Hereticks, and they have a Right to judge for themselves who are so: therefore all Churches, who preserve the Orthodox Christian Faith, lie under an indispensable Obligation to exclude Hereticks, and deny to them religious Fellowship; which Duty, if carefully discharg'd, might very much conduce to the Preservation of the Soundness and Purity of Christian Belief.

A Confutation of this Position, That a Man may lawfully subscribe to any Test, or make a publick Declaration of his Faith, in any Form of Words requir'd, while he can, in any Sense whatsoever of his own, reconcile those Words to Scripture.

A G A I N S T my last Assertion it may be objected, that Hereticks, in this Age, are grown so wise and cautious, that it is impossible to detect them; and that by this means Church-Censures are defeated. If you offer to them, 'tis said, any Articles of the Orthodox Faith to be acknowledg'd and subscrib'd, they will, without the least Scruple and Hesitation, declare their Assent to them, tho, at the same time, they do not believe they are true and scriptural: this is their Principle asserted in their Writings, and confirmed by their Practices, none ever having been heard of, who have refus'd any Benefice or Preferment, for not subscribing the Articles of the Church, how contrary soever they are to their inward Judgment and Opinion. Since then it is a Maxim, which they assert and publicly vindicate, That it is lawful to subscribe to any Confessions of Faith, which they can in any Sense whatsoever, made by themselves, and reserved

served secret in their Minds, reconcile to the Scriptures, tho they know that Sense is contrary to the Meaning of the Proposers of those Articles; I must acknowledge that this Position and Practice, will, in some measure, defeat the proper Power and Discipline of the Church, and disappoint the Means which I have above suggested to suppress their Heresy.

But how wonderful and astonishing, how loose beyond Example, is this avow'd Principle? Who can hear it without Admiration and Abhorrence? How could one have thought it possible that such a Defection from Truth and common Probity, could ever have happen'd among Protestant Divines, even such as are eminent for the Profession of Integrity and Uprightness, and seem to lay the whole Weight of Religion upon those Virtues? Who could have imagined that such Men would have laid the Axe to the Root of Trust and Faithfulness, and so subvert the Foundations of publick Societies? This is a Subject of such Importance, that I cannot but express my Detestation of so loose and unnatural a Principle, and I shall endeavour to invalidate and expose it, by showing the absurd and dangerous Consequences that attend it.

The first Thing I shall alledge for this Purpose, is, That this strange Position makes one great Duty enjoyn'd in the Gospel, entirely impracticable: we are commanded, after two Admonitions, to reject an Heretick.

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Suppose

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Suppose then that a Person should be accus'd of Heresy before proper Judges, or Officers of the Church or Congregation; can those Judges do more than demand of him whether he believes such an Article of Faith, and offer to him such Confessions or Summaries, as would be a sufficient Test to distinguish Hereticks from sound Believers? Now the accus'd Person can never be convicted of his Error, if he readily undergoes all the Tryals made to detect him, and subscribes all the Confessions and Forms, how strict soever, offer'd to him; supposing too, that this Liberty of subscribing any Propositions, which Men disbelieve, with secret Savings and Reservations, of a contrary Sense, were warrantable and just, it would make the Commands of Christ concerning the laying Hands upon, or ordaining Pastors for the Church, of no effect: for it is suppos'd they must make some Confession or Acknowledgment of the Christian Faith, before they are constituted Pastors of a Christian Society; but how can they make it appear, that they are not Hereticks, and do not hold Opinions inconsistent with sound Faith, if publick and solemn Declarations may be subscrib'd to, when the Subscriber has quite another Meaning, and may, at the bottom, be a *Sabellian*, a *Montanist*, an *Arian*, or one of the wildest and most extravagant Sects, that usurp the Name of Christians, who all reconcile their respective erroneous Opinions with the sacred Scripture.

And

And if this Maxim be allow'd, that all may subscribe to any Confession of Faith, in any Sense whatsoever of their own, as said before, then all Hereticks, without Distinction, *Muggletonians*, *Socinians*, *Camisars*, *Papists*, &c. may be admitted, and as integral Parts form a Christian Society, which will then become a most deform'd, unnatural, and monstrous Composition, a Medley of inconsistent and unsociable Ingredients; by which means, as well the Admission of proper Members into the Church, as the Exclusion of Hereticks from it, will be render'd impracticable.

Besides, if any Declaration of Faith may be assented to in any Sense of our own devising, which, in our own Judgment, is agreeable to Scripture, the Parity of Reason will extend this Liberty much farther; for it will be equally warrantable for Princes to sign Leagues and Alliances made with Neighbour Princes, and then execute them in any Sense form'd in their own Minds, which they conceive is not contrary to Truth, and so disappoint the State or Monarch, to whom they solemnly engag'd their Faith; and then there would be no Treaty-breakers found in Nature. We remember when by such a secret Sense, foreign to the common Meaning of the Words, an Alliance was interpreted, by a great Monarch, not to be violated, by alledging, That the Spirit of the Treaty was kept, tho not the Words. And what Reason can be assigned, why Princes may

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not warrantably thus act, if they can, in any Sense whatsoever, reconcile their Meaning to Truth and Probity, as well as Clergymen subscribe Forms of Confession with the same Latitude?

Thus likewise all Promises and Contracts may be render'd vain and insignificant, and mutual Credit, Trust, and Dependance, to the Ruin of Commerce, and the Confusion and Destruction of Civil and Religious Societies, may be extinguish'd. If Students, upon their Admission into the University, or private Colleges, or Candidates in other Societies may be allow'd (and why should they not, if these Gentlemens Principles are right?) to wrest in their own Minds the Articles they subscribe, to any Sense, not only remote from, but contrary to the ordinary Meaning of the Words; then how foolish and impertinent is it, to require any such Words to be sign'd by any? And if solemn Declarations and Promises may be sign'd in this loose way, why may not Oaths likewise be taken in the same Latitude? And then what Security have the People of their Prince's Protection, or the Prince of the Peoples Obedience? And why may not a Witness before a Magistrate, or Judge, take any Oath, in any Sense whatsoever, which he imagines is agreeable to Truth? and then all Civil Government is eluded, and the Courts of Justice must be shut up for ever.

If the Principle of these *Latitudinarians* is justifiable, it will follow, That supposing
all

all that profess themselves Members of the Church, should take the Privilege that these Men allow them, and declare and sign their Assent to all her Articles, while they do not believe they are true, but only in a quite different Sense from that in which the Words are usually taken, and tell us that there is no Necessity to believe them, how convenient soever it may be to subscribe them: It will follow, that if a Church is constituted and distinguish'd by her Creed and Confession of Faith, that it is possible that all the Members may declare their Assent, and yet not believe one Article, and then there might be a Church consisting of Words and Syllables, written or printed, without one proper Believer; that is, there would be an Ecclesiastical Society without one Member. Besides, it will follow that the Church might be made up of Dissenters from it, should those Dissenters believe her Articles of Faith, and her own profess'd Members should disbelieve them, tho they subscribe their Assent. In all this artful Management, notwithstanding the Pretensions of the Authors of these Principles, to extraordinary Integrity, what can we find but finish'd Dissimulation, and sincere Hypocrisy, by which our Words are turn'd to a Delusion, and our Language becomes a Lye; while every Man, with unrestrained Liberty, may deceive his Neighbour, and defraud him of his Right to Truth? Such loose Sentiments and Positions as these, which one would think could not be

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be heard by a sober Christian without Astonishment and Detestation, are asserted and practis'd by popular Clergymen, who subscribe to Religious Tests with this evasive Latitude, and by their double Entendres, wrested Meanings, and Varieties of foreign Interpretations devis'd by themselves, make Articles of Faith appear a Jest, and Religion a Turn of Wit.

This collusive Practice is asserted and proved, by the Author of the Remarks on part of a Bill brought into the House of Lords, entitled, *A Bill for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness*. The Remarker affirms, that "This Latitude of
" subscribing they all (the Disbelievers of
" the Trinity) openly and professedly maintain in their common Conversation."
He had before cited the Author of the Scripture-Doctrine of the Trinity, who, in his Preface, advances this Position, "That every
" Clergyman may subscribe the Articles and
" Liturgy of the Church in any Sense, in
" which the Person subscribing can reconcile
" it to the Scriptures." He affirms farther,
" That a whole Book has been written to
" justify this way of subscribing, which is
" avow'd and maintain'd by the whole
" Party." And tho these Passages must be supposed to have created Abhorrence in the Author of those Remarks when he writ them, yet perhaps it had not been wholly unuseful, if he had thought fit to have inserted any one Word that might have shown
how

how much he detested such a loose Jesuitical Doctrine. I cannot but say, that in my Judgment, he was too tender and favourable to them, to let them go off without the least Censure, or any Mark of his Displeasure, for maintaining such a pernicious Principle: half a Line, or one single Epithet, might have prevented any Surmises that might perhaps arise from the total Silence of the Remarker, as to the Lawfulness of this evasive Practice, which he there relates, but not condemns.

Actions are no less expressive of our Sentiments, than Words themselves, and therefore have been required by sovereign Powers, and enjoin'd as publick Tests, to discover the religious Opinions of their Subjects. If therefore a Declaration in Words may be innocently eluded, by reserving a secret contrary Meaning of our own Invention, then will it be lawful also, to perform any outward Action by which we are requir'd to express our religious Belief, with the like Evasion, in concealing a different Sense in ourselves; and hence it will follow, that when Religious Prostration and Divine Honours were requir'd to be paid to *Pagan* Emperors, or the Idols of the Nations, the ancient Christians might lawfully have comply'd with such Commands, if they could have reconcil'd, in any Sense whatsoever, of their own making, this Worship of false Gods to the Scriptures: and this they might have done by the help of modern Distinctions

tions and secret Reservations; whence it will follow, that the illustrious Christian Confessors in former Times, and the modern Martyrs in this Nation, expos'd themselves by a criminal Obstinacy and Rashness, to the Dungeons, the Cross, and the Flames, which they might with Prudence have avoided, by reconciling the outward Acts of Worship to Reason and Scripture, by putting upon them some Sense or other, that might have done them so friendly an Office; for thus they might have easily eluded the Persecution and Rage of their Adversaries, by renouncing their Opinions, and yet keeping them at the same time; while they made the Imposer believe that they were of his Mind, and yet preserved in themselves an Opinion inconsistent with his, according to the celebrated Scheme of the Gentlemen of the New Sentiments. And is it not wonderful and shocking, to the highest Degree, to hear a considerable Number of Protestant Divines assert and justify such a manifest Fraud and Double-dealing? Can any Decisions more absurd or monstrous, be extracted from the Writings of the subtle Scholars of *Ignatius*? And is not this a very just Prejudice against the Doctrine of the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity? Will not this prevaricating Casuistry be enough to shake their Scheme in the Opinion of honest and impartial Men, who love Truth and Integrity, better than any Profession of Uprightness, that is consistent with,

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and reconcil'd to, such fraudulent Shifts in Matters of the last Importance.

* It is certain that the Disbelievers of Christ's Divinity are considerable for their Numbers, that they are back'd and encouraged by many great and powerful Friends and Patrons, and that they are Men of an active and enterprizing Genius; their Number is much greater than it appears, for there are Multitudes of secret and clandestine *Arians*, or Disbelievers of Christ's Divinity, who have not Courage enough to throw off the Mask, and come from behind the Curtain, openly to assert and vindicate their Doctrine, according to the laudable Example of Mr. *Whiston*, who, to his Honour, has, in this Case, acted an honest and open Part; and tho he maintains no other Errors than many of his Friends approve in secret, yet he manifests much greater Sincerity, than the greatest Pretenders to that Virtue, who espouse Mr. *Whiston's* Principles, without his Probity and Fortitude: It is the Mark of a generous and upright Mind, for a Man to own and confess, before the World, his religious Principles, that are of the greatest moment, and nearly concern Eternal Felicity, and not to skreen himself in doubtful Phrases, hide in ambiguous Words, or metaphysical Mists, and fly for Concealment to the Lurking-holes and Fast-

* This Disputation was penn'd before the Writing of the Learned Dr. Waterland on this Subject was publish'd; to which I refer the Reader for full Satisfaction.

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nesses of the Schools ; nor think it fit, at present, to lay by their Disguise, for Reasons not very hard to be guess'd at.

Now those Men may be justly suspected of Arianizing Principles, who, whilst the Contagion of this obsolete Heresy reviv'd, so much prevails, and the Number of the Infected encreases to so great a Degree, are notwithstanding indolent and unaffected with the growing Mischief, and offer no Assistance, nor express any Zeal to stop its Progress; who neither from the Pulpit nor the Press, nor in Conversation, warn their Neighbours of the Danger that threatens them, nor endeavour, out of Compassion to the People, to expose and confute, with Resolution, by Argument and Reason, this unchristian and pernicious Doctrine; but rather speak favourably, and with Tenderness, of the Authors and Spreaders of it, and discourage and discountenance those who zealously oppose them, and cry out they are too warm, and push things too far. They who never mention with Respect and Esteem, the Writers, that with Spirit defend the Orthodox Faith, when at the same time they cry up, or very sparingly censure, the Authors of the *Arian* Side: they, who in our present Circumstances, when this Anti-scriptural Error is propagated with great Zeal, Power, and Interest, and carried on with such Success, as to threaten the Kingdom with a Revolution of Faith; are altogether silent, and refuse to declare what

Creed

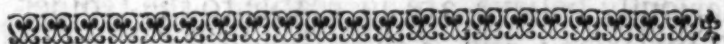
Creed they espouse. And they, who will not, when earnestly entreated, for the Peace of Christian Churches, remove the Scandal they lie under of being erroneous, by an obstinate, and unaccountable Refusal to make a publick Declaration of their Faith; by which Means they may prevent the Surmises and Censures of the Nation, and restore Peace, Love, and Union among Fellow-Christians, are justly suspected to be Disbelievers of Christ's Deity: For since, a free and open Declaration of their Principles may do much Good, and cannot in this Conjunction do any Harm, whatever it might have done a few Years ago; since the Case, I say, is quite alter'd, and it cannot be pretended that any human Form of Words is impos'd upon them; while their Fellow-Christians that are *offended* by their Silence and Neutrality, and only desire to be gratify'd with the Knowledge of their Opinion in a Matter of this Importance, in what Form of Words they please, that will signify clearly their Belief of Christ's Deity in the strict Sense: I cannot imagine how they can excuse themselves, if they are sincere and sound Catholicks. Should it be granted that so great a Number of Men that earnestly desire, and entreat them to clear up their Character, were weak, and in this Point unreasonable; yet no less a Casuist than *St. Paul* would decide the Dispute in favour of the weak Brother: for he has declared, that rather than offend a weak Christian,

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stian, he would chuse not to eat Flesh as long as he liv'd. Whether therefore they are justly or unjustly suspected, it is certain that suspected they are, and that by great Numbers, as unsound in the Christian Faith; and therefore it is their Duty to declare themselves in some Expressions or other, let 'em chuse what they please, that will come up to the Sense of the reform'd Catholicks, relating to the Article of Christ's Divinity; and not to lay Stumbling-Blocks in our way, and lead us into a strong Temptation to believe they are guilty of Heresy, when it is so easy for them to explain themselves, and so hard to give Reason why they do not. It is difficult to find out the Meaning, why a good Christian should, thus call'd upon, refuse to wipe off this Blot that sticks on his Character; nor is it sufficient, that he explain himself to a few in private, or to his own Congregation: the Scandal given is publick and general, and his Declaration ought to be commensurate to it. Let 'em therefore consider, why, at this time, they decline the giving open and publick Satisfaction to the Christian World, that they are Orthodox, as to the first great Article of the Christian Faith, if indeed they are so: For till that be done, we are justify'd, when we conceive a strong Presumption, that they are unsound in this Point, or at least great Favourers of the new Scheme; for, in such a Case, their affected Silence and Neutrality must express their Consent: for here, he that is not for

us is against us, he must be an Enemy, or a very cold Friend.



SECTION II.

The Growth of the Arian Heresy in a new Dress, and the Danger that threatens the Orthodox Establishment.

HO' it must be allow'd, that the open and secret Disbelievers of Christ's Divinity, join with the Atheist, Infidel, and Libertine, who will all bring in their auxiliary Forces to assist them, hoping to find their Account, in siding with a Sect more popular and powerful than themselves against the Orthodox, or Catholicks; yet I cannot believe, that in the present Conjunction, or till the Body of the Clergy and the People are brought over to their Opinions, and so modell'd and dispos'd as to be willing to bring about such a Revolution, they will think it proper to attempt the abolishing of the establish'd Faith, and the repealing and expunging of the Article of Christ's Divinity out of the Confessions and Liturgy of the Church, since that Article of our Religion is a Part of our Laws and Constitution. They cannot, I imagine, think that things are yet ripe enough for such an Enterprize. I do not, I must
acknow-

acknowledge, condemn their Zeal and Industry in propagating their Doctrines, which are of the highest Nature, and which they seriously believe are agreeable to the Gospel-Revelation: and if they should strive to get the Civil Government on their side, I shall not censure them for it, for this is to act in Character and in Conformity to their Maxims: and I shall always honour those, who, with Uprightness and Sincerity, conduct their Ways agreeably to their Principles. But I am concern'd to see, that by their successful Industry in making Profelytes, in an Age dispos'd to a loose and heretical Way of Thinking, and the spreading of their Contagion far and wide, they have gain'd so many, and such powerful Friends, that they have no reason to despair of making a greater Figure, and appearing yet more formidable to the Orthodox: And should it happen, that in any future Reign, the Monarch upon the Throne should embrace their Opinions, and a considerable Number of Prelates, and great Men should imbibe the same Principles, and so becoming most acceptable to the Sovereign, should have sufficient Interest to promote their Friends to all sorts of Civil and Ecclesiastical Dignities, and Preferments: It is not improbable, that in such Circumstances they may get the Catholick Faith abolish'd, and their own Heresy establish'd by Law. And it is reasonable to believe that this is their Aim, nor do I blame them for it; for had I seriously espous'd their Doctrine,

trine, I should think myself oblig'd to do the same; and every honest *Arian*, in his turn, will justify me for acting in Conformity to my own Principles: and I must declare, that I will do whatever is in the little Sphere of my Power to break their Interest, and disappoint their Hopes. And if the reform'd Catholick Clergy and Gentlemen would exert themselves with Life and Vigour, and engage with becoming Fortitude in a Cause, which concerns the very Being of Christianity, and therefore nearly affects eternal Salvation, how soon would they shame and confound their Adversaries?

In the Reign of King *James II.* when we were threaten'd with the Return of Popish Superstition, what a noble Stand, to their immortal Praise, did our Clergy make? What divine Zeal, what heroick Courage, what Concern did they express in Defence of their Religion, and the Service of their Country? witness the divine Discourses full of Reason, Argument and Eloquence, that constantly came from the Pulpits in all Places of this great City! witness the Triumphs gain'd by our Doctors in Disputation, and learned Conferences, over the Champions of the Church of *Rome!* and witness the Number of accurate Volumes, writ with great Spirit and Judgment, by various Hands on various Subjects, in Vindication of the Protestant, and for the Subversion of the Popish Doctrines.

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Did not our Pastors, at this time, imitate the pious Ardour, and intrepid Resolution of Martyrs and Confessors; the Industry and indefatigable Labour of Apostles and Evangelists, and the Zeal and inflexible Stedfastness of Primitive Christians? At the same time, the greatest Part of the Dissenting Congregations, and their Leaders, and the most considerable for Learning, Power, and Interest, notwithstanding the hard Usage they complain'd of in the preceding Reign, and the Indulgence, and specious Pretences of Favour and Kindness they met with in this; by a wise and praise-worthy Conduct, refus'd to strike in with the Papists, to the Prejudice of the common Interest of the Protestant Cause. Now, likewise did our Lords and Gentlemen in, and out of Parliament, make an honourable and successful Opposition to the Designs of the Popish Party.

And shall not the great Examples of these Worthies, inspire and animate our present Clergy, Lords, and Gentlemen with Spirit, Zeal, and Courage to use all un-coercive Endeavours to guard our Orthodox Faith, and preserve the Church, by dispelling the *Arian* Storm that gathers apace, hangs black, and threatening over our Heads; and, if not prevented with timely Care, may involve the Nation in a pestilent Heresy?

Is not this a growing and fashionable Sect, and are not their Doctrines, at least, as anti-christian and pernicious as those of the Church

Church of *Rome*? Why then are not the first oppos'd, and encounter'd with the same Zeal and united Force by which the last was suppress'd? That Church, as before observed, holds the chief Articles of Christian Faith, the Doctrine of the Trinity, as well as the rest of the Protestant Creed, tho they add many other Points of their own Invention; while the *Arians* subvert the Foundation of the Christian Religion, by denying one necessary and essential Part of it, The Deity of Christ: and therefore I see no Reason why we should be so civil and complaisant, as to compliment them with the Appellation of Christians, if we mean any thing more than Christians in Name, and in a loose equivocal Sense. The Orthodox, or *Anti-Arians*, believe the Deity of Christ to be the principal Doctrine of the Gospel-Revelation, and a necessary Part, that constitutes Christianity: and therefore the Denial of that Article, in their Judgments, must be destructive of the Faith; and a Man that maintains the *Arian* Principles, can no more be really a Christian, than a dead Body can be really a Man, when the Soul, a constituent essential Part of that Species, is separated from it. Many well-meaning Persons, I imagine, think favourably of the Disbelievers of the Deity of Christ; and do not express that Detestation of their Principles, and make that Opposition to the Progress of them, as they would do, were they more clearly inform'd, that they are contradictory

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to the Orthodox Faith, and repugnant to Christianity. They cannot easily believe, as I said before, that Neighbours, who join with them in their Religious Assemblies, worship God in the same Way, are their Fellow-Communicants at the Lord's Supper, and perhaps the Pastors that teach them, and administer the holy Sacrament to them; can hold such unchristian and pernicious Doctrines. They cannot think so hardly, or perhaps, they will say, so uncharitably of their Ministers, and Neighbours, who communicate with them in the same divine Service, and converse with them in a Christian Manner: and therefore to avoid their being mark'd and distinguish'd as Disbelievers of Christ's Deity, is one great Reason why these Men, who have let go our Faith, hold fast our Communion, and obtrude themselves upon Church Assemblies, and mingle themselves familiarly with the Orthodox; for, by this Means, they more successfully carry on their Designs in disguise, and rob, in a Mask, their Neighbours of their Faith. Now, that People may be disabus'd, and made to stand upon their Guard, they should be inform'd of the subtle Ways in which these Persons lie in wait to deceive.

It is remarkable, that this spiritual Contagion has chiefly infected, and taken the Heads of young Gentlemen; who not thoroughly instructed in the Faith, which they profess'd, and observing of themselves, or being told by crafty and insinuating Seducers, what

what the Difficulties are, that attend the Orthodox Side of the Question, have, in a groundless Fright, before they had sufficiently enquir'd, read and consider'd what might be alledg'd to ease their Minds, by removing their Objections; and what greater Difficulties they should meet with, on the other hand; rush'd, with Precipitation, into an opposite Scheme: To avoid a rough, but safe Sea, they change their Course, and desperately run on Rocks and Quick sands. But this is no more, than what younger Men are obnoxious to; they are apt to think that an old-fashion'd Suit of Doctrines, which their Great Grandfathers were proud of, cannot, in this refin'd Free-thinking Age, sit well upon a young Gentleman of a polite Taste in Religion, elevated Sentiments, and a Mind happily turn'd, both for Wit and Argument. These aspiring at Distinction, and ambitious of mending the Christian System, despise our old rusty and ignorant Reformers; who, in their Opinion, were very unskilful in correcting the Popish Faith, while they retain'd the worst Part of it, the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ: Hence the near Relations of such a Person cannot but feel uncommon Comfort and Satisfaction, and congratulate each other upon their good Fortune in having a Branch of their Family grown up to be a Wit, one that makes a considerable Figure among the fine Spirits of the Age, and is caress'd and ap-

plauded by the ingenious Gentlemen of the new Sentiments.

The Insincerity of the Authors of the New Scheme.

Tho' Prisons, Torment and Death must be undergone with Patience and Fortitude, when we are call'd by divine Providence to the Honour of suffering for the Cause of Religion; yet it is not worth a crowding for neither: There are no Allurements and Advantages in Pains and Penalties, that should tempt us to rush upon them, and seize them by Violence; tho', at the same time, they are not so formidable and frightful, as should disarm us of our Resolution and Constancy, and drive us to unwarrantable Shifts and Arts to avoid them; when, by divine Permission, we are brought to the fiery Tryal. Our Saviour not only allow'd, but directed his Apostles and Disciples to fly from one City to another, to escape the Fury and Malice of their Persecutors, and to use all lawful Means to preserve their Lives and Liberties: but if they were seiz'd by Force, and carry'd before the Magistrate's Tribunal, they were commanded to confess their Saviour boldly, and assert his Religion in the Face of the World, whatever the Event should be. They were not then permitted to use any secret mental Interpretations and Expressions of a Double-Meaning, to impose upon the Magistrate, and conceal their Doctrine;

trine; nor to take any Tests, or make any Declarations in a different Sense, than that which the Words commonly bear, and which was the known Meaning of the Imposer: No, it is evident by their Practice, that they judg'd otherwise; for, with undaunted Courage and Resolution, they openly, and without reserve, declar'd what their Religion was; tho that Declaration brought upon them Shame, Tortures, and Death itself. But had they and their Successors thought it lawful to have us'd the subtle Distinctions, collusive Interpretations, and the Manner of subscribing to any Declaration, and taking any Test with a conceal'd Exposition of their own Invention, according to the Doctrine and Practice of some modern Divines; they might have eluded the Sentence of the Magistrate, and escap'd the terrible Sufferings which they chose to undergo: and then no such Things as illustrious Confessors, and a noble Army of Martyrs, had been ever known in the World.

It is very wonderful, that in this Reform'd Kingdom, the odious and exploded Notions of the School of *Ignatius*, which are plainly repugnant to common Honesty, and destructive of Societies; I mean, Equivocations, and Double-Meanings reserv'd in the Mind; should be openly asserted and vindicated by Protestant Casuists: yet this is our Case, the Patrons of the new-fangled inconsistent Scheme of the *Arian* Sect give in to this detestable Doctrine, and without Hesitation

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tion conceal their Opinions in spite of all Tests and Subscriptions.

Tho' the *Arian* Faith, and that of our modern Disbelievers of Christ's Deity differ not in Substance, for the last is, in the main, the same with the first; yet it is so varied by the Embroidery and superficial Works of Criticism, and inlaid up and down with new Chimæras and extravagant Figures, Fineries superadded by the late Inventors of an ancient Heresy, that *Arianism* lies hid in an artful Disguise, and it becomes difficult to unmask the Heretick. Numberless are the Wiles and double Appearances of this *Protean* Race, wonderful the various Impostures, Transformations, and Distortions of these dextrous Shifters of Shape, these flexible Posture-Men in Divinity; we must chase these Hereticks, these wild Boars of the Forest, that break in and ravage Christ's Vineyard, thro secret Retreats, thick Metaphysical Darkness, and the impracticable Recesses of the Schools; we must follow them thro Thickets of confus'd Notions, the Brakes and Bryars of intricate Expositions, arbitrary Criticism, and new ensnaring Distinctions: we must, I say, unharbour them from these Coverts, and drive them from all their Haunts and Subterfuges, before we can come to attack them effectually; for here it is more difficult to find out, than to overcome the Enemy.

If we demand of one of these Persons justly suspected of *Arianizing* Principles, what
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his Opinion is of the great Article of Christ's Divinity, he roundly answers, That he, for his part, is by no means an *Arian*; but then his Meaning is, that he does not hold all the Doctrines of *Arius*, or, that he does not maintain his Opinion concerning Christ's Deity in the same Manner, and under the same Expressions that *Arius* us'd; and thus he gets off, and eludes your Enquiry. Ask him if he believes that Christ is God, his Answer is very ready, that he verily believes he is so; but he equivocates, for he does not understand by the word God what we do, for he takes it not in an absolute, but a relative Sense; that is, that Christ is God by Office, a Minister or Under-Agent to God most high in his Government of the World, and especially of his Church. Enquire of him, if he looks upon our Saviour to be Eternal, or without Beginning; he will likewise consent to this, but his secret Interpretation of Eternal and Unbeginning is no more, than that the Time or Point of Duration cannot be assign'd when he began to be. If you demand whether he thinks that Christ is Omnipotent and Omniscient, he will answer affirmatively; that is, as he understands it, Christ is Omnipotent and Omniscient, by a delegated Power and Knowledge from God most high, tho' that Interpretation is most absurd; for no Being that is not God most high, is capable of receiving infinite Perfections, for that would infer a Plurality of Gods, in the absolute and highest Sense of the

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the Word. Would you know whether he acknowledges Christ to be God most high, of necessary Existence, and unproduced by the Operation of the Will or Power of the Father, this he will by no means allow. Would you know whether he believes him a Creature or a made Being, this likewise he will deny: what then can he be, but a middle or intermediate Being, between the eternal and most high God, Creator of all Things, and a Being that is produc'd by his free Will, that is a Creature? which is a Flight of Philosophy superior to common Sense, and which puts all Reason out of Countenance. Yet these solemn Triflers in sacred Things, when press'd with this unsurmountable Difficulty in their New Scheme, endeavour, by the Abuse of a little *Greek*, and a great Cloud of impertinent Metaphysics, to defend their grave and scholastick Inconsistencies. By this Conduct, they imitate the impious Philosopher *Epicurus*; who, resolving that the World should have its Origin without the Help of any Artificer, suppos'd that his primitive self-existent Atoms had all a strait Motion downwards by their native Weight, and then by their Rencounters and various Complications, as he affirm'd, they form'd all mix'd and compound Bodies: But then reflecting that if all his Atoms had a strait and direct Motion, they could never meet and strike upon each other, from which Concourse and consequent Collisions his Worlds were to arise,

arise, to cure this terrible Flaw in his System, he invented another Motion, that was neither strait nor oblique, but *quasi* oblique, not quite, but almost as it were oblique: In like manner these great Philosophers and profound Divines, to heal the gaping Wound in their new Scheme, introduce a Being, who is not the Supreme and un-ministerial Creator; nor yet a Creature, but an intermediate Agent, who is not altogether and full out, but, as it were, very near and almost God most high. Thus while these wise Masters furbish up the old System of *Arius*, adorn it with fresh Embellishments, and refine it with curious Inventions, they make it not only obscure, but unintelligible, and add Nonsense to Impiety.

These Gentlemen follow the bold and enterprizing Genius of the celebrated Masters of the *Grecian* Schools, whose Pride and Vain-glory was such, that they thought they had Wit and Learning enough to defend the most absurd Paradox, and endeavour'd to distinguish themselves from the low and confin'd Thinkers, by maintaining repugnant and incompatible Doctrines. *Zeno* and his Stoick Successors, to the moral System of Philosophy taught by *Socrates*, added the Doctrine of irresistible Fate, a Power superior to that of the Gods themselves; and by this means maintain'd, as our *Malmsbury* Philosopher Mr. *Hobbes* has done, Necessity and Liberty both together; and instead of governing the Passions, taught their Scholars

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quite to extinguish them, that they might become happy by ceasing to be Men. *Aristotle* took a Fancy to make the World Eternal, and, at the same time, to assert the Existence of one supreme and other subordinate Gods; for whom however he had not the least Occasion, having nothing for them to do: who therefore, by his Indulgence, were exempt from all Care and Concern, and left to pass their Hours in everlasting Oscitation and Indolence. After he had asserted the Eternity of the World, to assert likewise the Being of Gods, who had no hand in making or governing of it, was impertinent: But the *Stagyrite* would maintain both, either to escape the Name of an Atheist, or to show that there is nothing so inconsistent and absurd, which a great Philosopher cannot lay down and defend; and the greater the Difficulty is, the greater was thought the Honour. Nor did *Democritus* and his Followers undertake a more easy Task, as if they look'd upon a Scheme of Philosophy as jejune, dry, and unworthy of a great Master, unless it abounded with Absurdities. This, I say, was the Pride and Vain-glory of the Wits of *Greece*; and, in my Opinion, the Undertaking of the Gentlemen of the new Sentiments, is as rash and hardy, and may be suspected to rise from the same Principle.

By what has been said, it appears how difficult it is by any Questions to fix these slippery Gentlemen; who, being consummate Masters of the Arts of Evasion, plot, and wind,

wind, and turn a thousand Ways, to prevent their being unmask'd, and made to appear openly in their proper Colours: and in this they surpass their greatest Predecessors, who nevertheless were eminent for their Dexterity in disappointing their Adversaries, and preventing the Detection of their real Sentiments about this great Article of Christ's Deity. These Men must surely have a perverse Anti-Genius to Truth, a strong Bias to Notions out of the way, and a wonderful Facility of deviating into Heresy.



SECTION III.

Greater Difficulties in the Scheme of the Disbelievers, than in that of the Believers of Christ's Deity.

IT must be acknowledg'd, that the Article of the real and absolute Divinity of our blessed Redeemer, God manifest in the Flesh, in opposition to the relative Sense of God by Office, is certainly a great Mystery of Godliness or Religion, if we respect the Manner of the essential Union of three adorable Persons in one Godhead: But if this sublime Mystery be look'd upon as an Object of Revelation, it will then, as to the Certainty of it, be no wonderful Thing; for what God declares concerning his own Nature, who

alone knows it, must be true, and those to whom he declares it, ought to believe his Revelation without Diffidence or Hesitation; and tho it is true that the most clear and capacious Understanding cannot comprehend and explain the Mode how one God exists in three distinct Persons, yet it is as true, that if this Article is reveal'd by him, it is the indispensable Duty of Men to believe it, tho they cannot conceive how it can be so: for we believe, upon certain Grounds, the Existence of a Multitude of Things, the Manner of whose Existence we cannot penetrate or comprehend. We believe God's Eternity and Immensity, but are unable to form any positive equal Idea of either. We believe, that by his Omnipotent Power, he created the World out of nothing; yet it confounds all human Faculties to conceive how Beings should be made, otherwise than from Pre-existent Matter: and we readily acknowledge, that many Things there are, tho we are altogether ignorant how they are.

The Catholick, or *Anti-Arian*, relying on the Unerring Authority of Divine Revelation, believes, that the Son of God is equal with the Father in Power and Glory, and with Him and the Holy Spirit is the one eternal and most high God; tho, at the same time, he acknowledges, that he cannot grasp and unfold this Divine Mystery, which is the Object of his Belief: and this is no more, than is found to be true in

a thousand other Instances. Not only the Divine Attributes, especially God's Immenfity and Eternity before mention'd, but every Creature in Heaven and Earth, the Air and Sea; not only the Sun, Moon, and Stars, but every Inſect and Grain of Matter, do, not only in reſpect of their ariſing by Creation out of nothing, but in reſpect of their Structure and Composition, their ſpecifick Differences and eſſential Properties, elude the Search of the moſt ſagacious Enquirer, and ſurpaſs the Comprehension of the wiſeſt Philoſopher; and yet of their Exiſtence we have no doubt.

Let us, on the other hand, enumerate the many inſuperable Difficulties, that the Diſbeliever of Chriſt's Deity muſt encounter. He muſt, in the firſt place, according to the chief Doctors of the New Scheme, believe, that there is an intermediate Being between the moſt high God, the undelegated and unminiſterial Creator of the World; and a meer Creature, one that is in a conſiderable Degree a made Being, yet not altogether and full out; but, as it were, and almoſt, God in a ſtrict and abſolute Senſe. He muſt believe, that a Finite Being was capable of being poſſeſs'd of and endow'd with Infinite Perfections communicated to him, that he might be enabled to create the Univerſe, which Infinite Perfections, would make him equal to the moſt High, and infer a Plurality of Gods, nor would Omnipotence then be an incommunicable Attribute.

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He must believe that Christ, who, in his Judgment, is not Infinite Eternal God, may be an Object of Divine Worship; and that he might justly receive Adoration, as he did from the Man born blind to whom he gave Sight, even before any Command was acknowledg'd by the *Jews* to be given for such Adoration: and if Men and Angels were enjoin'd to worship him, it is a clear Argument that he was endow'd with unlimited Perfections, otherwise he must have been an Object incapable of receiving that Supreme Honour, as before has been asserted.

And if the Gentlemen of the *Arianizing Scheme*, as well as the *Socinians*, deny the Satisfaction of Christ in the Sense of the Orthodox, as their Principles lead 'em to do; then he who follows such Guides, must believe that Christ did not lay down his Life to ransom Man from everlasting Death, that he made no Satisfaction to atone offended Justice, nor that he dy'd a Sacrifice for Sin: for he had no Sin of his own, and the *Arian* is suppos'd not to believe that he dy'd in the stead, or for the Sins of others; he must believe then, that he dy'd without Cause or any valuable Consideration; for if it was not to make Propitiation for our Sins by suffering in our room, for what other End and Purpose did he suffer? Did he die only to make good a Prediction? If it be said it was to set before his Disciples an Example of great Patience, that seems a low and jejune Scheme

Scheme of our Redemption, a Scheme unworthy of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, compared with that of the *Anti-Arian*, in which it is suppos'd, that the Son of God, equal with the Father in Power and Glory, from his own free Compassion, took upon him our Nature, suffer'd the Death of the Cross; a Suffering fully equivalent to the Punishment that Man had deserved, or, at least, such as Almighty God was pleased to accept as Expiatory, that Man might be put into a State of Salvation, if he comply'd with the reasonable Terms of the New Covenant. Now this gives us a great and elevated Idea of God's Wisdom and Goodness, Holiness and Justice; it raises our Admiration, and furnishes our Minds with an Argument for the highest Strains of Love and Gratitude. He must believe, that when the sad Night before the publick ignominious Death of our Saviour, the Sorrows of Death took hold upon him; that when in his dreadful Agony he sweated Drops of Blood, when his Soul was fill'd with Horror and Amazement, and an Angel was sent from Heaven to comfort and support him under this terrible Conflict; and that after, when in his dying Strife upon the Cross, he cry'd out, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* That when the Sun was eclips'd by miraculous Power, the Veil of the Temple rent, the Earth shook, the opening Graves releas'd their Dead: when, I say, these prodigious and
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amazing Events, accompany'd with the dying Pangs of the Redeemer, insomuch as the Centurion that stood by cry'd out, *Verily this was the Son of God!* that there was nothing more in this astonishing Tragedy, that was attended with such mighty Wonder, and stupendous Miracles, but only to exhibit a Scene of Patience under great Sufferings.

But if he supposes that Christ, a produc'd Being in his Opinion, made Satisfaction, and paid a Ransom for Mankind; he must then believe that a Creature's Sufferings were of such Value and Virtue, as to expiate the Guilt of the whole World, and secure the Honour of God's Government, Justice, and Detestation of Sin; and that therefore he would accept of this Sacrifice of one Creature as a sufficient Atonement, and Propitiation for the Guilt of an infinite Number of others.

Numbers of the modern Disbelievers of Christ's Deity imagine, that he liv'd and dy'd only to illustrate, refine, and enforce the Light of Reason, or the moral Law: Now the moral Law enjoins Men to preserve their Lives from the Rage and Violence of their Enemies, if by lawful Means it is in their power so to do; and even our Saviour, by a positive Law, commands his Disciples not rashly to rush on Pains and Sufferings, but to fly from one City to another, to escape the Fury of their Persecutors; notwithstanding, that had they not be-

betaken themselves to flight, but yielded themselves up to the Power of their Enemies; they might have shewn great Examples of patient Suffering. Our Saviour therefore, in the Instance of his Death, when he might easily have escaped; for he told them, that if he pray'd for it, an Host of Angels would be sent to rescue him from the cruel *Jews*: In this Case, I say, he is so far from improving the moral Law, that enjoins Self-Preservation by all lawful Means, that he acts in direct Opposition to it, which surely must be upon some more important Motive and for some higher End, than merely to shew an Example of Patience; for, I imagine, these Gentlemen themselves would not have justify'd the Apostles if they had run upon the Magistrate's Sword, and thrown themselves upon the Cross merely to give an Example of Submission. Nor does it appear, that they ever out of choice, suffer'd Imprisonment, Torments, and Death, when it was in their Power to avoid them.

He must believe, that the infinitely just and good God decreed, to punish with Death, an excellent and innocent Person, his dearly beloved and only Son, for no other End, than to show how patiently he could undergo Pain and Torment, which must tempt Men to a harsh and unamiable Idea of God, and to hesitate about his equal and impartial Justice.

He must believe, that our blessed Redeemer, who, in his Opinion, is not God most
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high, was not so much as an honest and sincere Man, in not disabusing and undeceiving the *Jews*, who cry'd out, that he blasphem'd when he made himself God.

He must believe, that our Saviour, when he promis'd that his Spirit should lead his Disciples into all Truth, and that the Gates of Hell should never prevail against his Church, has really deluded them.

He must condemn the Heathen World, as guilty of Idolatry, in worshipping more Subordinate Gods, and one Supreme; and, at the same time, acquit the Disbelievers of the Deity of Christ, tho they exactly do the same thing.

He must allow, that if any Bishop in this Reform'd Church, and Realm, should disbelieve the Deity of Christ, and embrace the *Arian* or the Modern Scheme, this Prelate might, with a safe Conscience, confer Holy Orders on Persons; who, as he knows, profess the Orthodox Belief: and therefore, according to his Principles, must be Hereticks and Idolaters; and that likewise he might, without Blame, confirm Persons in a Faith contrary to his own.

These, and many more such Difficulties must he, that denies the Deity of Christ, overcome; and, if he can do so, he has no reason to fear, that his Belief is not capacious enough, to receive Opinions encumber'd with the greatest Absurdities, tho it were that of Transubstantiation itself. On the other hand, the Orthodox Christian has only,

ly, or chiefly to struggle with the sacred Mystery of three Persons in one Godhead: Now, allowing that he cannot conceive how this Thing can be, yet, if Divine Revelation declares that the Thing is so, he is not obliged or concerned to know how it is so.

We all believe, that God most high is self-existent, that is, existent without a Cause; yet it is impossible to conceive how he can thus exist. We believe, as said above, his Infinite Attributes, which howsoever exceed our Comprehension: and is not his intrinsic Nature yet more unsearchable? And can it be known but by Divine Revelation? We clearly comprehend the Reason, why we should believe the Revelation, tho we cannot comprehend the Thing reveal'd. Besides, what is more unintelligible than Creation of Beings out of nothing? What more inexplicable than the Union of the Soul, a spiritual Being, with a Material Body? Does not the Cohesion of the Particles of Matter, and the other difficult Phænomena mention'd by Mr. *Glanvill* in his *Scep sis Scientifica*, besides a thousand more that might be nam'd, distress and confound the most penetrating Judgment, and put all Reason, Learning, and Philosophy to a stand? And yet we have no doubt of the Existence of these Objects, how superior soever they are to our intellectual Faculties.

I would here observe, that very probably Men, who are tender of the *Arian* Interest; and tho, perhaps they are not entirely un-

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der that Denomination, yet are far gone in that heretical Taste, and are fond of reconciling Light and Darknes, the New Scheme and Orthodoxy; will censure some Positions in this Writing, and say that they are attended with uncharitable, rigorous, and cruel Consequences, by making *Arians* and *Anti-Arians* look upon one another as Hereticks and Idolaters, and causing a terrible Separation in the Church. For answer to this, I refer the Objector to our pious Reformers, and the Principle they went upon, when they renounc'd the Church of *Rome*: And farther yet, the Imputation of too severe and uncharitable Consequences from the Doctrine I have asserted, must be remov'd from that Doctrine, and charg'd upon the Founder of our Holy Religion, who has forbidden Communion with Hereticks and Idolaters.

Impious and Heretical Opinions, by their own Guilt, and as they are productive of wicked and flagitious Manners, bring down great Judgments upon a Nation.

I Will now lay before those Gentlemen, who, not infected with Heretical Notions, maintain however a supine Inactivity, and serene Indolence, while this fundamental Error exerts its malignant and pernicious Efficacy, which it has in common with all
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heretical and irreligious Principles, in bringing destructive Calamities upon their Country; that by this means they may be awaken'd from their drowsy Indifference, and excited to oppose with Zeal and Vigour, the Progress of this dangerous and unchristian Doctrine, that gains so much upon the Kingdom.

After the Restoration of King *Charles II.* to the Throne of his Ancestors, great Numbers of Gentlemen, disgusted with the Hypocrisy of many, who, in the Times of the Usurpation, carry'd on detestable Designs under the Mask of Religion, began to have all Things Sacred and divine, in great Contempt. The Streams of Impiety and Unbelief, which broke out at first from a few Springs, multiply'd by Degrees, and greatly encreased in that and the three successive Reigns: and while in their Progress they took in new Branches, and continual Supplies, they at length swell'd so high, as to bear down all Opposition. The Statutes made to discourage and restrain the formidable Growth of this great Evil, being impotent and lifeless without Assistance, and unable to execute themselves, availed little or nothing for the suppressing of it, till now a Deluge of Profaneness and Immorality has, in a sad degree, swept away Religion, and laid waste all social Vertues. We have a demonstrative Evidence of the exorbitant and uncontroul'd Power of irreligious Principles, from the Declarations and Practices
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of the present Times, in which many not only deny the Existence of the Divine Being, and Multitudes expose the Christian Revelation, and deride the Professors of it; but Infernal Assemblies, and impious Cabals, are formed on purpose to affront Religion, to insult the Maker of Heaven and Earth, ridicule his Terrors, and sport with everlasting Torments; where the Miscreant, that, inspir'd by the Prince of Darkness, invents any extraordinary and surprizing Strain of Blasphemy, and expresses his Hatred and Abhorrence of Sacred Things, in a new and unheard-of Turn of Profaneness, receives the Compliments and Applause of the Company. Sallies of Wit and Raillery, with which former Scoffers used to expose Religion, seem now to be a flat and insipid Entertainment; the Conversation that pleases these Monsters of Impiety, must be rais'd and season'd with Ingredients that manifest Satanical Malice and Rage against God and his Worshipers; something that no godless Mind ever conceived, nor any profane Mouth ever utter'd before. These Men seem resolv'd to confute by their Example, what has been often affirmed, That no Man is compleatly wicked in this Life, as none is compleatly good, while they seem to aim at that accomplished and perfect Wickedness, that shall scarce be capable of Addition in a State of Damnation.

As the impious and heretical Opinions, and vicious Manners of the late Reigns, were

were punish'd from Heaven by various publick Sufferings, Fire, Sword, and Pestilence; so I believe all, who own and worship a Divine Being, and acknowledge his Providence, will, upon due Reflection, conclude that this enormous Height of Vice, this insolent Impiety, perhaps the greatest that was ever practis'd in any Nation, where any Scheme of Religion was part of their Laws and Constitution, from the Creation of the World to this Time, has produc'd an Effect as extraordinary, and as unexampled as the Cause itself; I mean, the publick Calamity, and great Confusion in which the Nation is involv'd, of which I discours'd in my former Writing: and here I shall only add, that I cannot but declare, that the detestable Principles, and corrupt Manners of Men, have provok'd Almighty God, who will not always let Men trifle with his Patience, despise his Goodness, and affront his Justice, without expressing his Resentment, to inflict this heavy Judgment upon such a guilty People. Let profane Mockers speak what they please, I must always think that this Judgment upon *Great-Britain*, came immediately from the Hand of God, for the Punishment of National Guilt: for I cannot see what Interposition of second Causes could bring about that astonishing Delusion, and unaccountable Infatuation, which produced this terrible Calamity, that like a violent Earthquake has shaken the whole Island.

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Tho this heavy Judgment has distress'd, there is no great Appearance that it has much reform'd the unhappy Sufferers; many are indeed made poorer, but how few are become better? and therefore is there not just Ground to fear what we have righteously deserved, that yet more dreadful Sufferings may follow this, which has been ineffectual to reclaim a People inflexible and harden'd in Iniquity. Our Government and Religion has been long preserv'd to us by a continu'd Train of Miracles, as every one will grant, that reflects on the History of *England* for Thirty Years past; yet the seasonable and surprizing Interpositions of Providence for our Protection, have scarcely been more wonderful than our Ingratitude: and is it reasonable to expect that Miracles should be always repeated in our favour? As that would change the very Nature of a Miracle, by making its Course constant, so would it prove that the just Judge of the World will for ever spare the Guilty. It is much more probable, as more agreeable to his Justice, that if his past Punishments are incapable of reforming a profligate Generation, that then severer Chastisements will be employ'd; his Arm is never too weak, either to save or punish: have we not Reason then to fear that Almighty God, incens'd by our incorrigible Obstinacy, and continued Provocations, will pour out upon us the eldest Vials of his Wrath, and yet stronger Lees of his Vengeance?

geance? May we not apprehend, that even now he is preparing his Instruments of Death, that he is bending his Bow, and fitting his Arrows on his Strings; that he is whetting his glittering Sword, and will soon lift up his Arm to inflict yet wider and deeper Wounds, than those we have already felt? And will not the Event be sad, if he shall find it more easy to destroy, than to reclaim us?

Should they, who have no Veneration for a Divine Being, nor Taste of Piety, and who believe that all Virtue arises from the regular and just Administration of Civil Government, and not from Religion, expose this Discourse; I shall shew no more regard to these Persons, who being destitute of a Divine Principle, are entirely incapable of judging about Things of this Nature, than I would do to a blind Man, who should deride me for telling him that I perceiv'd Light and distinguish'd Colours; or an unhappy Lunatick, that should mock and ridicule me in his way, for pretending to a sound Mind, and the Exercise of Reason. But it is to be hoped, that Gentlemen, who have not so far thrown off the Religious Prejudices of their Education, and given in so much to the prevailing Principles of Impiety, as to renounce the Christian Institution, as well as those, who are not so confirmed and deplorable Libertines in Practice, who wish the Stability and Honour of the Government, and the flourishing State of

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74 *Modern ARIANS unmask'd.*

their Country, will be of a contrary Mind : For should we continue in this stupid and insensible Condition, yet louder Thunder, and more dreadful Storms of Vengeance, may from time to time be used to awaken us, till we are wasted with repeated Judgments, or judicially left to consume and destroy ourselves.

But some perhaps may ask, To what does this Discourse tend? Does this affect the *Arian* Controversy? I answer, very much; I do not mean as an Argumentation to demonstrate the great Error of this Hypothesis, but as a Representation of its malignant and pernicious Nature, which it has, as I have said, in common with damnable Heresies, and Atheistical Opinions, that by their own intrinsick Guilt, and as they are productive of corrupt and wicked Manners, bring down Divine Judgments upon a degenerate People. And this I have done, that the Orthodox part of the Nation may shake off their calm *Laodicean* Unconcernedness, and employ their utmost Zeal and Diligence, to stop the spreading of these Antichristian Principles, out of Love to their Native Country, which impious and unscriptural Opinions threaten with publick Calamity. It is very certain, that prevailing Vice and Corruption are destructive of the Peace and Welfare of any People, abstracted from the intellectual Guilt of irreligious and heretical Doctrines: but how can Vice and Corruption of Manners be removed, while pernicious Doctrines are

are so much profess'd, and find such powerful Patrons? For while such Opinions are favoured and encouraged, they will diffuse their fatal Influence, poison the Minds, and blast the Morals of the People: for it is not to be doubted, but the Practices of Men will bear a Conformity to their Judgments and Articles of Belief. Since therefore the violent Torrent of Vice, and flagitious Manners, is in so great a measure derived from the prevailing Power of impious and heretical Principles, in order to reform the Nation, and revive our languishing, if not expiring Piety, it is necessary that these Opinions should be attack'd with Vigour, by the Clergy and Laymen of all Denominations, in their respective Stations, and according to their various Talents and Abilities, that so a Check may be given to their Growth, lest they spread their Contagion over the whole Kingdom. And should not, in reason, those who have evidently caught this Spiritual Plague, be excluded from Commerce and religious Fellowship with the Sound? And should not those who are violently suspected, because they frequent the Company of infected Persons, and fly from wholesome, into unhealthy Air, and mingle out of Choice with those who have the malignant Spots and Tokens out upon them, be obliged to perform Quarantine, to undergo Examination, and give an account of their healthful State, before they are allow'd to have free Communion with the Uninfected?

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While the Heretick and the Irreligious are thus vigorously assaulted, and Men in Power join their Authority with the ardent Zeal, and pious Labours of the Clergy, especially those of the highest Station; while inferior Magistrates, by the ready Execution of the Laws against Profaneness and flagitious Manners, and by the yet greater Power of their own Example, vindicate Religion, and restrain wicked Practices; while Societies for Reformation of Manners, who pursuing the worthy End of their Institution with Zeal, Fortitude, and unwearied Application, expose themselves to Hatred, Contempt, and Violence, are not discouraged and brow-beaten, but favour'd and supported by their Superiors either in Rank or Interest, and animated to carry on, with Vigour, their honourable Designs, that promote the Glory of God, and countermine the Contrivances of the vigilant Enemy of Mankind; and lastly, while private Persons, having at heart the Honour of the Divine Being, and the Interests of Christianity, the Security of the Government, and the Felicity of their Country, as well as their own outward Prosperity, and inward Peace, according to their several Capacities and Endowments, labour to retrieve the Reputation and Dignity of Religion, to keep despised Vertue in Countenance, and bring Impiety and Vice into Discredit and Contempt; that a Man of Principles and unblemish'd Probity, may no longer continue a By-word and a Jest, nor be
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reviled and pointed at by impious Wits, and scoffing Libertines, as Fools or Monsters: While, I say, such an excellent and glorious Design is set on foot, and carried on with Zeal, great Hope may be conceived that it may be accompanied with an extraordinary Effusion of the Divine Spirit, to enlighten Mens Minds, and change their Hearts; and then banish'd Virtue may be brought back in Triumph, Avarice and Oppression, Bribery and Corruption, Falsehood and Injustice, may be exposed to Shame, and cover'd with Confusion: then may a generous Publick Spirit, and Love to our Country, revive among us; Justice, Probity, Benevolence, Temperance, and Frugality, may come into fashion, and prevail in their turn over the contrary Vices: then may our Credit be restor'd, while Vertue and Honesty shall lay the Foundation of mutual Confidence; and then may our Commerce flourish, and our Strength by Land and Sea grow still more formidable, till our Losses are repair'd, and our languishing Country recovers her former Vigour.

And now, before I conclude, let me expostulate with the Gentlemen who have thoroughly espous'd the New Sentiments, and those who, tho they declare for the Orthodox Side, yet think that this Point of Christ's absolute Divinity, is not of so great moment, that it should create any Separation of the Orthodox from their Adversaries; whence, by retaining Hereticks and Idolaters in the
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Bosom of the Church, and admitting them to religious Fellowship, they make the Command of Christ of no effect. I address myself chiefly to the younger *Arians*, or New-Thinkers, for I have little Reason to hope, that the veteran and confirm'd Leaders of the Party, who reflect on themselves with the particular Pleasure and Satisfaction of Founders of a new Sect, or, at least, Revivers of an old one, are concern'd for their Honour, and fondly ambitious of enlarging their Heretical Empire, by making more Profelytes, or that any of their stanch Disciples will be reclaimed from their Error by any Arguments that I can produce, tho ever so convincing and conclusive: but the younger sort, not being so hard and inflexible, may be receptive of Impression from the Force of Reason. I earnestly, Gentlemen, then desire of you to consider this Subject with an equal and unprejudic'd Mind, to weigh it with that Concern and Attention, that the Dignity and Importance of it justly demand: Both your Duty and Interest oblige you to apply yourselves with the greatest Care, to the Study of a Point, which concerns your Eternal Salvation. I entreat you therefore, to weigh impartially the Difficulties on either side, and let not Conceit, Vanity, or Prepossession be cast into the Scale to affect the Balance. Contemplate, with due Deliberation, the great Difficulties you must contend with; some of which I have enumerated, before you can bring o-

ver your Reason to the Scheme of the New Thinkers: and here I will add one more, that is, That if you espouse their Doctrine, you must believe that Pastors of Churches, and Congregations, who embrace the new *Arianizing* Hypothesis, may, without the least Guilt, let their People go on in the Profession and Practice of Idolatry, in worshipping Christ as God most high, without ever admonishing them of their gross and pernicious Error. If the Article be of small Importance, why do they labour with so much Zeal, to propagate their Opinions? If it be a Matter of great Importance, why is not the Alarm given from the Pulpit; and why are the People unwarn'd of their Danger? Can a Pastor see his Flock involv'd in the terrible Guilt of Heresy and Idolatry, and leave them undisturb'd by any Admonition? Can he himself join with them in sacred Communion, administer to them the holy Sacrament, which he knows they will abuse to idolatrous Purposes, and yet never acquaint them, that it is a Duty of the highest Concernment, not to pay Divine Worship to Christ as God most high? and never explain to them what is meant by these Words, *In remembrance that Christ died for thee*; which the Communicants generally take in this Sense, that Christ dy'd in their stead, as the Words clearly signify? Can this total Neglect of their People in so high a Point of Religion, consist with Integrity, and the Discharge of the Pastoral Office?

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Should they imagine that their Conduct is justifiable, while by this means they hope, by degrees, to bring over the Orthodox to the *Arian* Side; then is it plain that, in their Judgment, a great Evil may be done, and a necessary Duty entirely be neglected, that Good, in their Opinion, may come of it.

It is said, the Jesuits in *India* comply in part with the idolatrous Practices of the Heathens, while they suppress several important Points of the Christian Religion; and alledge, for their Justification in so doing, that their Design, by such Compliances and Concessions, is, that they may insinuate themselves into the Favour of Infidels, and by degrees persuade them to embrace Christianity. But shall Protestant Divines imitate such an impious and abominable Example? Did the holy Apostles, Evangelists, and Primitive Christians once communicate with idolatrous Worshipers, to convert them to the Christian Faith? Where is Uprightness and ancient Integrity! have they utterly forsaken this Nation?

Let me now expostulate with the Gentlemen, who, notwithstanding, for their own part, they declare for the Orthodox; yet, by an unaccountable Humanity and Tenderness to the Disbelievers of Christ's Deity, express a great Concern for their Honour and Interest, and would by no means renounce their Communion, for that they think is to carry Matters to an unwarrantable Length, and to shew an uncharitable

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Disposition; and of these Gentlemen, there is a great Number among us. The first Person, that I have heard of, that entertain'd this notable Whimsy, and took a Fancy into his Head to reconcile repugnant Principles; and bring Contrarieties to an amicable Agreement, was *Episcopi*; who undertook to take out the Sting and poisonous Teeth of *Arianism*, and present us with a tame and harmless Heresy. Odd and peculiar Conceits in Theology, have generally been produc'd in the Heads of Men of superior Learning, and an enterprizing Genius: Persons of meer Knowledge, clear Reason, and solid Judgment, never rise to such Heights in the Regions of Chimeras, Phantasms, and empty Ideas; nor sink with such Agility into the profound Depths of Absurdities and Inconsistencies, as Scholars of great Erudition, and a strong Fancy, without Humility and a modest Diffidence. And now let the Followers of this celebrated Writer reflect on the Load of Difficulties, with which their fanciful Hypothesis is encumber'd. Does not this Doctrine evidently make void the Command of Christ, concerning the Exclusion of Hereticks? If the Adversaries of Christ's Deity are not guilty of damnable Heresy, condescend to shew us what you think is a damnable Heresy? Whether there is, or can be such a Creature in the World as a Heretick; and whether you believe this Article of Faith of Christ's real Divinity is necessary to Salvation; and if not, what other Article is so?

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Does not the *Episcopian* Scheme oblige you to hold Communion in Divine Worship, with such as your Principles condemn as Idolaters? Can those meet together in Religious Service, who have two Objects of Worship essentially opposite; one God most High, and one a made Being, a Creature?

Can you imagine, that the Disbelievers of such a fundamental and necessary Article of Belief are not guilty of Heresy? And if they are, should they not be excluded from Christian Communion with our Churches? Do you believe that the Worshippers of a false God, such as a made Being is, are not Idolaters, and as such ought to be avoided? Or are you convinc'd, that a pretended positive Command can nullify the Light of Reason, and abolish a Law of Nature for ever; and by this means cover the *Arian* Worshipper from Impiety? Is it not unwarrantable Candour, and unreasonable Moderation, to entertain a Heretick in our Churches, and caress the Viper in our Bosom, notwithstanding such Kindness and Condescension is condemn'd by the Laws of the Gospel? Is not this an Attempt, to consolidate the greatest Absurdities, to incorporate, in the same Composition, the most repugnant and incompatible Ingredients, and compromise the Difference between opposite Ideas, that destroy one another? This, Gentlemen, is no light Matter; it is a Point of the highest Consequence, as affecting the Vitals of Christianity and eternal Salvation; and therefore

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both the Dignity and Importance of the Subject of this Expostulation, should prevail with you, to take it into your serious and impartial Consideration, that you may be stirr'd up to withstand, and attack with Vigour, the formidable Power of the *Arianizing* Adversary.

If impending Dangers threaten the Commonwealth with Destruction, while a serpentine Brood of Atheists, Unbelievers, Free-Thinkers and Hereticks, whose Anti-scriptural Doctrines shake the very Foundations of Christianity, wind themselves into Families, slide into Company, and mingle with Varieties of Conversation, where they shed their Venom, and propagate their pernicious Opinions: Is it not time for all Orthodox Christians to look about them, to lend their helping Hand, and use their utmost Endeavours to stop the Progress, and prevent the sad Consequences of such prevailing Errors? If a dreadful Fire breaks out in a Town by Night, thro the Carelessness of the Watchmen, or the Wickedness of malicious Enemies; should not every Man, that observes it, spread the Outcry, rouse up his sleeping Neighbours, and do all that is in his Power, to prevent the sad Effects of a general Conflagration? If the Sea swells, and, driven by Storms and Tempests, overflows its Banks, and the Fences rais'd to oppose its Fury; and, with a spreading Deluge, sweeps away Flocks, Herds, and Houses in its Course: would not every Man be inexcusable

84 *Modern ARIANS unmask'd.*

ble that saw it, and stood with a sedate and unconcern'd Indifference, and took no Care to stop the Torrent ready to lay the Land waste and desolate? In such Cases of universal Danger, it is every Man's Duty and Interest, to exert his utmost Vigour to save his Country: And this is plainly the Case, in respect of impious Principles, that become rife and impudent among us.

How desirable is it in such Circumstances, that those Numbers of our Orthodox Clergy, who are Men of distinguish'd Learning, able in Disputation, and not encumbered with busy Life; and whose Duty it is to stand in the Gap, and oppose the Encroachments of a pernicious Heresy; would bestir themselves, and follow the Example of several excellent Writers? the learned Dr. *Waterland*, the judicious Earl of *Nottingham*, the acute Dr. *Knight*, who have signaliz'd themselves in this Controversy, bravely defended the Orthodox Faith, and led in triumph the Champions of the *Arian Philistines*, that defy'd the Armies of Christ, the living God; besides many others, as well Dissenters as Churchmen, who have engag'd in this honourable Cause, fought a good Fight, and cover'd with Shame the boastful Adversary.

F I N I S.

